

THAT WHICH IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A hinge apparatus for a vehicle floor system, comprising:

an elongated, planar bridge member, comprising opposite first and second edge portions and a surface
5 extending between the first and second edge portions; and

opposite first and second hinge members, each pivotally connected to a respective one of the first and second edge portions of the bridge member, wherein each hinge member comprises a base member and a planar upper
10 panel extending outwardly from the base member, wherein each hinge member is movable between a first position and a second position, and wherein the base members of the hinge members are in adjacent, contacting relationship when the first and second hinge members are both in the
15 first position.

2. The hinge apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the upper panel of each hinge member comprises opposite first and second surfaces, and wherein the first surface of ^{the} a hinge member is substantially flush with the bridge
5 member surface when the hinge member is in the first position.

3. The hinge apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the base members of the first and second hinge members interlock with each other when the first and second hinge members are both in the first position.

4. The hinge apparatus of Claim 1, wherein each hinge member comprises a lower panel that extends outwardly from the base member in spaced-apart, opposing relationship with the upper panel, and wherein the upper
5 and lower panels of each hinge member are configured to

removably secure a vehicle floor panel therebetween.

5. The hinge apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the second surface of each upper panel comprises one or more projections that facilitate securing a vehicle floor panel to the upper panel.

5 6. The hinge apparatus of Claim 4, wherein the lower panel of each hinge member comprises opposite first and second surfaces, and wherein the first surface of each lower panel comprises one or more projections that facilitate securing a vehicle floor panel to the lower panel.

7. The hinge apparatus of Claim 4, wherein the lower panels of the hinge members are substantially coplanar when both hinge members are in respective first positions.

8. The hinge apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the upper panel of each hinge member comprises a tapered free end.

9. The hinge apparatus of Claim 4, wherein the lower panel of each hinge member comprises a tapered free end.

10. The hinge apparatus of Claim 1, wherein each hinge member is pivotally attached to ^{the} ~~a~~ respective bridge member edge portion via a web of material having a thickness of less than about 1 millimeter (mm).

11. The hinge apparatus of Claim 4, wherein each hinge member is pivotally attached to ^{the} ~~a~~ respective bridge member edge portion via a web of material having a thickness of less than about 1 millimeter (mm).

12. The hinge apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the upper panel of each hinge member is substantially coplanar with the bridge member when in the first position, and wherein the upper panel of each hinge member is transverse to the bridge member when in the second position.

13. A vehicle floor system, comprising:
an elongated, planar bridge member,
comprising opposite first and second edge
portions and a surface; and

opposite first and second hinge members,
each pivotally connected to a respective one of
the first and second edge portions of the
bridge member, wherein each hinge member
comprises:

a base member; and
a planar upper panel extending
outwardly from the base member, wherein
each upper panel comprises opposite first
and second surfaces;

wherein each hinge member is movable
between a first position and a second
position, and wherein the base members of
the hinge members are in adjacent,
contacting relationship when the first and
second hinge members are both in the first
position;

a pair of floor panels, each secured to the
second surface of a respective one of the hinge member
upper panels; and
a floor covering material supported by the
floor panels, by the first surface of each upper panel,
and by the bridge member surface.

14. The vehicle floor system of Claim 13,
wherein the floor covering material comprises carpet.

15. The vehicle floor system of Claim 14,
wherein the carpet comprises a pile having a dimension
and wherein a width of the bridge member between the
first and second edge portions is at least twice the pile
dimension.

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16. The vehicle floor system of Claim 14,
wherein the carpet comprises a pile having a compressed
dimension and wherein a width of the bridge member
between the first and second edge portions is at least
twice the pile compressed dimension.

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17. The vehicle floor system of Claim 13,
wherein the upper panel first surface of a hinge member
is substantially flush with the bridge member surface
when the hinge member is in the first position.

18. The vehicle floor system of Claim 13,
wherein the base members of the hinge members interlock
with each other when the first and second hinge members
are both in the first position.

19. The vehicle floor system of Claim 13,
wherein each hinge member comprises a lower panel that
extends outwardly from the base member in spaced-apart,
opposing relationship with the upper panel, and wherein
the upper and lower panels of each hinge member are
configured to removably secure a respective one of the
floor panels therebetween.

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20. The vehicle floor system of Claim 13,
wherein the second surface of each upper panel comprises
one or more projections that facilitate securing a

floor panel to the upper panel.

21. The vehicle floor system of Claim 19,
wherein the lower panel of each hinge member comprises
opposite first and second surfaces, and wherein the first
surface of each lower panel comprises one or more
5 projections that facilitate securing a floor panel to the
lower panel.

22. The vehicle floor system of Claim 13,
wherein the lower panels of the hinge members are
substantially coplanar when the first and second hinge
members are both in the first position.

23. The vehicle floor system of Claim 13,
wherein the upper panel of each hinge member comprises a
tapered free end.

24. The vehicle floor system of Claim 19,
wherein the lower panel of each hinge member comprises a
tapered free end.

25. The vehicle floor system of Claim 13,
wherein each hinge member is pivotally attached to a
bridge member edge portion via a web of material having a
thickness of less than about 1 millimeter (mm).

26. The vehicle floor system of Claim 19,
wherein each hinge member is pivotally attached to a
bridge member edge portion via a web of material having a
thickness of less than about 1 millimeter (mm).

27. The vehicle floor system of Claim 13,
wherein the upper panel of each hinge member is
substantially coplanar with the bridge member when in the
first position, and wherein the upper panel of each hinge

- 5 member is transverse to the bridge member when in the second position.